United Nations A/59/PV.36

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

36th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 October 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 38 and 46 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/206)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/285)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/261)

Mr. Bshaina (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take this opportunity to thank the President for organizing this very important meeting. I also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his interest in African issues and his ongoing efforts to establish and strengthen peace and to promote all development initiatives in Africa.

African heads of State and Government reaffirm their resolve and total commitment to the success of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). They have pledged to undertake effective and specific actions to implement NEPAD, which they view as a truly African initiative that responds to all their aspirations for full development.

The convening of this meeting to review both progress in the implementation of NEPAD and international support for the New Partnership clearly demonstrates that the international community is now trying to meet Africa's needs and to implement the commitments and the declarations adopted in many international forums, in particular the Millennium Declaration.

Africa knows that, first and foremost, it is up to Africans to carry out NEPAD. However, international support is crucial. Thus, we urge the United Nations and the international community as a whole to work for the attainment of the NEPAD objectives by taking practical, concrete steps such as mobilizing financial resources, implementing pledges and commitments, increasing official development assistance and direct investment and reducing the debt burden. Other steps should include a new initiative giving African exports access to world markets, in particular the markets of developed countries, assistance for strengthening human resources, in particular through investment in the areas of health and education, drinking water and the creation of infrastructure necessary for economic development.

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To make this new partnership truly effective and positive, our partners must first respect the will, history and culture of Africans. That means not imposing on countries political or other conditions or impositions that ignore the specificities and distinctiveness of African societies or that do not take into account the fact that development is a historical process and cannot be achieved by making political decisions.

Secondly, priority must be given to infrastructure projects, in particular communications projects and projects creating good road networks that would help development in all its aspects. That will promote stability and strengthen peace and security in Africa.

Thirdly, special attention should be given to projects that improve water resources. We need to promote the best possible use of all Africa's water resources for various purposes, such as agriculture, in order to radically solve food supply problems and to end poverty in all African countries.

Fourthly, there is a need to eliminate all restrictions on technology transfers for development activities of a socio-economic nature.

Fifthly, the African tragedy needs to be taken into account. Over the past centuries, we have suffered the pillaging of African material resources. Bear in mind the role that those resources played in the development of some countries.

Sixthly, our partners in the donor community should realize that in contributing to the financing of this partnership they are benefiting their own societies materially and socially. Reducing emigration or preventing it by legislative and administrative measures will not serve a purpose. Investing in development projects in the countries where emigration originates would help keep people in place and prevent mass migration to other countries. Seven, dealing with one of the most serious problems facing Africa: the brain drain of its talent towards the developed countries, due to a number of interlocking factors. Creating a favourable environment in Africa for African talent so that those people can play the role intended for them by their countries, which spend a great deal of money on their education, would be beneficial for NEPAD and would enable us to avoid untold losses and expenses.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his two reports on the items we are discussing today — and yesterday — namely, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Since last year's report (A/58/352) and debate, some further progress has been achieved, both in the implementation of NEPAD and in the promotion of peace in Africa, as highlighted in the reports and acknowledged by many previous speakers.

Brazil would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those who were responsible for those achievements, mainly African stakeholders, the Secretary-General and the United Nations system, as well as Africa's development partners. We wish to convey a special message of recognition and support to the African Union, its previous Chairman, President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, and its current Chairman, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and his African peers for their commitments to the advancement of NEPAD, in particular the establishment of the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring peace and security in the whole Continent.

In that connection, Brazil highly praises and welcomes the unequivocal determination of the African Union to resolve the crisis in Darfur, which we consider to be a laudable and timely act of African ownership and leadership.

In his report (A/59/285), as many delegations have stressed, the Secretary-General acknowledges that fewer countries in Africa are now suffering civil strife or conflict. That welcome development nonetheless takes place in the context of the perseverance of several situations of instability that must be adequately addressed, preferably by means of conflict-prevention or peacebuilding mechanisms aimed mainly at the root causes of the conflicts.

Providing for a common understanding of potentially risky situations that can be addressed in a peaceful manner is, in our view, a clear improvement in terms of building relations with the African continent, bearing in mind that post-conflict situations and internal turmoil can easily turn into new conflicts

if a number of measures and policies are not implemented in a timely fashion.

It is certainly a positive development that, today, there is a clear recognition that Africa, in partnership with the international community, has better equipped to manage — and preferably avoid — conflicts on the continent's soil. That is so, first of all, because democracy is highly valued on the continent and democratic African Governments are fully committed to encouraging their brothers and sisters to join the democratic world and share the dividends of peace and security in a democratic system. Through concerted efforts either by the African Union or by regional organizations, all corners of the continent are now under the close scrutiny of responsible African leaders who do not hesitate to provide their support for building peace and promoting democracy.

Nonetheless, for peace and democracy to be sustained, democratic Governments must be able to address the high expectations and legitimate demands of their peoples in terms of development, since both social and economic development and democracy are highly prized values on the continent, and since both are closely associated. Development and democracy must come hand in hand to the continent, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is the appropriate framework to provide them with the necessary impetus. The international community and all those who support NEPAD should devote equal attention and priority to both issues.

Secondly, conflicts can be managed or avoided, since many helpful assessments exist regarding remedies to be applied to different situations. After decades of trying to apply the same prescriptions to different maladies, the international community and Africans themselves are fully aware of best practices and specific hindrances. Economic and social management policies have to be developed in accordance with the needs of each country and each circumstance. Again, the partnership with African organizations provided by NEPAD is the best course of action to be followed.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Brazil is now witnessing increasing efforts by Council members, together with the Secretariat, to develop multidisciplinary mandates for peacekeeping operations tailored to each situation. There is a long way to go before these operations can better address the need to properly manage the challenges of peace and security and the creation of a sustainable environment for development and long-term stability. However, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, the partnership that is being built between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council gives us all hope that we are on the right path.

Unfortunately, recent developments in Guinea-Bissau show us that, despite laudable efforts by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to marshal increased international support — in particular financial and economic support — for that country, the resurgence of instability could not be avoided. Brazil regrets that the response of the international community to the many steps taken by the authorities of Guinea-Bissau towards democracy was not sufficient. The only possible solution must therefore be found through sustaining our efforts and fully implementing the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau concerning renewed support for that country, including by revising the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and increasing the capabilities of the United Nations system in the country in coordination with increased bilateral assistance.

As mentioned yesterday by the representative of India (see A/59/PV.33), the India-Brazil-South Africa initiative has selected Guinea-Bissau as the first beneficiary of a programme of cooperation to be undertaken by the three countries. We are ready to start implementing this programme, and we would like other Member States to join us. Without urgent international support, Guinea-Bissau may not be able to surmount the current obstacles it faces in advancing in its transitional phase towards democracy and peace.

We highly appreciated the recent report prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa on South-South cooperation. Many of the initiatives taken by Brazil are listed in the document. Brazil is launching programmes in Africa, mainly together with Portuguese-speaking countries, that are closely linked to the priorities of NEPAD. Literacy and education; health, particularly in the area of prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS; job creation; agriculture; and science and technology: those are some of the areas covered by bilateral and multilateral programmes of cooperation, many of them conceived under the

auspices of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP).

Moreover, in 2004, CPLP countries will hold the fourth round of joint military exercises among the armed forces of all member States, five of which are African. We believe this is an important contribution to enhancing African capabilities regarding preparation and capacity-building for participation in peacekeeping operations. Brazil is strengthening its cooperation links with other African countries as well, particularly in agriculture and health. However, allow me to stress our understanding that the strongest ties between Brazil and Africa are still being developed in multilateral forums. By forging strong alliances with African countries in international negotiations, such as those conducted in the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization, regarding, for instance, market access and drug licenses, Brazil believes we are actively supporting African efforts towards the implementation of NEPAD.

We fully recognize that efforts by the international community complement those taken at the national level. That is the reason we insist on the need for a free and more equitable multilateral trade system in order to generate the jobs and wealth that are essential for the development of countries in Africa, as well as in Latin America and parts of other continents.

Lastly, allow me to recall the initiative launched by President Lula and his counterparts from France, Chile and Spain, concerning the fight against hunger and poverty. Twenty-six African countries have joined the initiative and await its development. Eradicating food deficiencies and ending poverty are our main goals. As President Lula stated in September here in New York, African countries and peoples are the ones who will profit the most from the positive results we are expecting from this effort of the international community, an effort that has been embraced by 120 countries. Brazil is fully engaged in the campaign against hunger and poverty, which is the first of the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that the Brazilian delegation looks forward to the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope that the report will provide a major contribution to the ongoing discussion on ways of strengthening the United Nations through reform of its institutions and processes. We are sure that an expanded Security Council, with permanent members from Africa, Latin America and other regions, will increase the chances for African peace and development.

Mr. Moutari (Niger) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Niger associates itself with the statements made yesterday by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Union. We echo the praise and appreciation expressed for the reports submitted to us under agenda items 38 and 46. Those reports clearly reflect the efforts made by Africa and its partners in conflict settlement, in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in the struggle against malaria and also underscore the current and future challenges.

My delegation will not dwell on the content of the reports, as they have already been analysed in the statements to which I just referred. I will simply add that the decision taken to jointly discuss NEPAD, the causes of conflict in Africa and malaria seems to us extremely appropriate. I would like to say how pleased Niger is by the many timely initiatives being undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser for Africa, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, to promote NEPAD within the United Nations system and with Africa's partners. These initiatives should be encouraged through substantial financial support and the effective strengthening of the Office of the Special Adviser.

In spite of the progress achieved in the settlement of conflicts in Africa, six hotbeds of tension remain: in Côte d'Ivoire, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Burundi, in the Sudan, in Western Sahara and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The countries and regional organizations of Africa have made commendable efforts to promote peace, through peace agreements or by establishing structures such as the Peace and Security Council, the Committee of the Wise and a continental early-warning body. The international community must strongly support these initiatives through appropriate contributions, both financial and logistical.

With respect to the conflict in Darfur, we welcome the support given by the United Nations, and particularly by the Security Council and its members, to the African Union mediation efforts under the aegis of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. However, we feel compelled to recall that humanitarian

assistance must be strengthened not only for the Darfur region but also for the Republic of Chad, whose enormous sacrifices are often forgotten as it bears the burden of over 200,000 refugees from the Sudan, which could endanger the internal stability that it has so painstakingly achieved.

Together with timely peace efforts, many African countries have endeavoured to eliminate the causes of conflict by seeking broader participation of their populations in public affairs, by consolidating and expanding democracy and good governance, guaranteeing the independence of the justice system and strengthening the capacities of their administrations. We believe that it would be fair for these countries in return to reap the dividends of democracy that are so often promised. For those countries, official development assistance should be increased and accompanied by a greater openness of the markets of the industrialized countries to their products, through the dismantling of tariff and non-tariff obstacles and through initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act. To supplement this North-South endeavour, it would be appropriate to more forcefully encourage South-South cooperation in fields as important to the implementation of NEPAD as education, water, agriculture and science and technology.

I take this opportunity to express Niger's heartfelt thanks to the developing countries that are already giving us considerable assistance each year in the form of admissions or scholarships to their educational institutions. Those admissions amount to more than 1,000 for a country such as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to hundreds for countries such as Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal and Tunisia, to mention just a few. Other countries, such as the People's Republic of China, give us considerable support, inter alia by helping us in our efforts to provide drinking water for all. Those few examples demonstrate — if demonstration were needed — that South-South cooperation has enormous potential that still remains to be mobilized and placed at the service of NEPAD.

Yesterday, the representative of India described two initiatives that seemed to us particularly worthy of support. One relates to the linkage of 53 African countries through satellite and fibre-optic networks. The other relates to the transfer of technology to Western Africa. In addition, the tripartite initiative of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) deserves to be supported and made more widespread.

Another sector that could help give impetus to the implementation of NEPAD is the mobilization of African expatriates who, according to some statistics, are already providing over $43 billion to the continent. In addition to these financial resources, their talents can and should be channelled appropriately towards the economic development of Africa.

In conclusion, I would like to make three comments that relate to points made in the report. I believe these are of particular importance. First, the United Nations should have additional financial resources, because the lack of financing limits United Nations action at the very time when the Organization is called upon to undertake a growing number of joint programmes and new initiatives.

Secondly, the United Nations system should make use of existing coordination mechanisms at all levels to strengthen the coherence of the support given to NEPAD.

Thirdly, development partners must create an international environment that is conducive to the growth and development of Africa and ensure that trade, assistance and debt policies are consistent, which is vital so that the African countries can at last benefit directly from international decisions in those fields.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada): Progress in the implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/206), is as exciting as it is timely.

The New Partnership recalls what Victor Hugo wrote more than a century ago: "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come". If this idea with respect to Africa's development is translated into reality, the twenty-first century could very well become the century of Africa. That presupposes, however, that the requirements of the Partnership will be fulfilled and that the commitments made will be honoured, based upon the following precepts. First, the primary responsibility for NEPAD's ownership is vested in Africa. Secondly, the developed partners, especially those countries that have had a historical and economic involvement in Africa from which they have profited for many centuries, must now "come up to the plate and bat" for the development of the continent.

Thirdly, peace and security are vital to Africa's development, and in that connection Africa bears primary responsibility for assuring that the causes of conflict are mitigated. Fourthly, the African Peer Review Mechanism affords the best hope for the aforementioned by ensuring that a culture of prevention takes precedence over a culture of reaction. Fifthly, improved coordination and collaboration among United Nations organs and agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the International Labour Organization, to mention a few, are indispensable to NEPAD's success. Sixthly, and most important, the Millennium Development Goals can serve as a blueprint for Africa's development.

NEPAD cannot be promulgated successfully without some passing reference to the history and early civilization of Africa, much of which has been lost to antiquity, through no fault of Africa's. Nevertheless, since the past is the best prophet of the future, NEPAD must take into account the wealth, wisdom and womanhood potential of Mother Africa. This can provide a solid foundation and can be the lodestar in the new development partnership arrangement.

In light of the above, my delegation can envisage Africa as the breadbasket of the world if its potential is developed and utilized properly. Add to this Africa's geographical position as the most centrally located of all the continents, and we have the makings of an awakened giant with limitless possibilities.

As part of the separated brethren of the African diaspora, brought about by the forced dispersion of a people with whom my delegation has a common ancestry, a common history, and a common struggle, my delegation remains excited about the success of NEPAD. Even with Grenada's very limited resources and its present heavy rebuilding responsibilities due to the ravages of Hurricane Ivan, Grenada pledges its support for NEPAD in whatever way possible.

Returning to the theme of "an idea whose time has come", I want to suggest that the time has come for the Caribbean Community to forge a loose structural arrangement here at the United Nations with the African Group. We have so much in common by reason of consanguinity, affinity and spiritual relationship that we can no longer afford to let the opportunity for closer association go by.

Let me conclude with the inspirational words uttered by a great pan-African Jamaican leader, Mr. Marcus Mosiah Garvey, here in New York at the beginning of the twentieth century, during a meeting of what was then the United Negro Improvement Association, where he said, "Up you mighty people. Climb Jacob's ladder, higher, higher, higher."

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports contained in documents A/59/206 and A/59/261. We find the information contained in the reports very informative and valuable.

We would also like to associate ourselves with the statements made by Nigeria, on behalf of African Union, and Qatar, on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

I also take this opportunity to commend the United Nations for its positive response in the implementation of activities in Africa related to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Tanzania recognizes the significance of NEPAD's development framework in complementing the political vision of the African Union, as well as its institutional architecture. NEPAD underscores the importance of economic development in addressing some of the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa and the necessity of sustainable social and economic development in order for peace and stability to prevail in Africa. It was therefore a logical and necessary decision by African leaders to make NEPAD an integral part of the African Union.

In the context of the ongoing socio-economic reforms and the Government's Development Vision 2025, Tanzania has drafted priority programmes for promoting and implementing the NEPAD agenda. Tanzania has integrated NEPAD into its national policies and development framework through institutional arrangements to manage the process at sectoral and national levels and through national and regional development programmes and projects. There are five pivotal sectoral committees, two of which are related to peace, security and good governance, while three are in the areas of infrastructure and social and economic development. These sectoral committees are coordinated by the President's Office in order to

provide NEPAD with the needed technical attention and political guidance.

Consistent with its political and public reforms at home to institutionalize democracy, good governance, transparency and accountability, Tanzania joined the African Peer Review Mechanism on 8 July 2004. This decision was announced at the Summit of African Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa. Tanzania believes that, in the spirit of sovereign equality and mutual trust, the Peer Review Mechanism is a very useful tool for consolidating the values of democracy and respect for human rights in Africa as a basis for development, as well as for consolidating peace, stability and solidarity in Africa.

In the areas of infrastructure, trade, industry and related activities, Tanzania has given priority to NEPAD programmes and projects which complement national development priorities and promote regional integration and cooperation in Southern and East Africa. Such projects should enhance regional integration; contribute to employment, income generation and wealth creation; reflect higher regional content and geographical balance; consolidate peace and enhance regional harmony; and fulfil basic social needs and poverty reduction objectives.

It should be noted that while integrating and implementing the NEPAD agenda, Tanzania has also integrated the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals at national levels with the support of NEPAD programmes in areas such as poverty eradication, fighting HIV/AIDS and malaria eradication.

In its resolution 58/237 of 23 December 2003, entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa", the General Assembly took note of the plan of action on the Roll Back Malaria initiative, which was adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held in Abuja in the year 2000, and which is contained in the Abuja Declaration.

The resolution called upon the international community to continue to support the Roll Back Malaria partner organizations, including the World Health Organization and UNICEF, as vital complementary sources of support for the efforts of malaria-endemic countries to combat the disease.

In Africa, malaria is the second largest killer of our people, especially children, taking more lives than HIV/AIDS. Malaria is the leading cause of outpatient and inpatient health services attendance for all ages and the leading cause of death in both children and adults in all regions of Tanzania. In Tanzania, the disease is believed to be directly or indirectly responsible for about 16 million malaria episodes and 125,000 deaths per year, of which 70,000 to 80,000 are children under five years of age.

The onset and spread of HIV/AIDS has compounded the fight against malaria. Malaria further weakens the immune system and, as a result, people infected by HIV are more susceptible to malaria. Children who have acquired the infection from mothers are the most vulnerable and succumb to death faster. The combination of malaria, HIV and tuberculosis infection is lethal and ought to be attacked in an integrated manner by Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The President took the Chair.

In implementing Millennium Development Goal 6, and in the spirit of the Abuja Declaration, Tanzania has been in the forefront of the war on malaria. We have waived taxes on mosquito nets and other products for the containment and rolling back of malaria. We have received the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which has enabled Tanzania to subsidize insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets that have significantly reduced infection among pregnant women and babies. However, we have learned that all those efforts can only succeed if people avail themselves of those opportunities and the international community redoubles its efforts to assist the malaria-affected countries such as Tanzania. In that regard, an advocacy and awareness campaign to fight malaria is an important undertaking that deserves serious consideration by us all.

The importance of developing effective vaccines and new medicines to prevent and treat malaria and the need for further research can never be overemphasized. We reiterate the call by the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session to pharmaceutical companies to take note of the increasing need for effective combination treatments for malaria, particularly in Africa, and to form alliances and partnerships to help ensure that all people at risk have access to prompt, affordable, quality treatment.

Finally, Tanzania commends and appreciates the international response garnered by United Nations efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and malaria. The Global Fund is also a useful mechanism, but as we all know, the resources thus far made available to it lag far behind the needs and challenges posed by those two scourges. We urge and encourage deliberate and bold initiatives, spearheaded by the United Nations, to invest more resources for research in curative medicines and preventive vaccines for both HIV/AIDS and malaria. The world has dedicated scientists who only require concerted political encouragement and resources to bring their talents to bear in liberating the world from those serious threats to human security and sustainable development.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report contained in document A/59/206, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: second consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support". It is our view that that report provides useful insight into the progress of the implementation of the agenda item under consideration.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the African Union, and by the representative of Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We all know that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an African initiative that needs to be supported by the international community. We thank the United Nations for the steps taken so far towards the implementation of NEPAD, particularly the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/7, which gave special momentum to the process. It is that kind of process and impulse that African countries expect to see in the years ahead.

Though it provides us with important information on the actions taken so far, the Secretary-General's report clearly recognizes that a lot more still needs to be done. African countries are determined to gradually achieve policy coherence in the implementation of NEPAD. Above all, we are all making an effort to align budgetary expenditures with NEPAD priorities.

Angola recognizes and commends the efforts undertaken by the Special Adviser on Africa, Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, and his Office. We hope the Office of the Special Adviser will be well provided with the adequate resources — both financial and human — in order to carry out its mandate promptly and efficiently. Indeed, we expect no less.

We think that the United Nations agencies should continue to play a major role in coordinating and mobilizing international support to NEPAD. We thank those agencies already working with NEPAD for their collaboration with and support for activities that give high priority to the implementation of that important initiative. We would especially like to encourage continued UNDP support for NEPAD institutions and for its secretariat, in particular, during the elaboration of its programme of work and the start-up phase of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Angola commends the excellent work of the Economic Commission for Africa in strengthening the African Peer Review Mechanism, which constitutes an important step in the establishment of the institutional framework for mutual accountability and policy coherence in Africa. Angola is proud to have recently joined the African Peer Review Mechanism and we seize this opportunity to appeal to all African countries to do likewise.

In its conclusions and recommendations, the report clearly recognized that there had been minor progress by African countries in overcoming the enormous difficulties they face in implementing NEPAD. A strengthened partnership with the international community is needed in order to meet the minimum goals and to give NEPAD a major impetus. One should not forget that NEPAD goals and objectives are the same as those set forth in the Millennium Declaration. Their particularity rests on the African reality. As the report further states, development partners of Africa need to give practical expression to their support for the continent. We are glad to have heard the representative of the European Union yesterday, stating that the Union is very much on track in increasing its official development assistance to 0.39 per cent of its members' gross national incomes in 2006, as part of longer-term efforts to raise official development assistance contributions to 0.7 per cent of gross national income. We call on other developed countries to take similar actions.

Angola has adopted a poverty reduction strategy paper aimed at improving the macroeconomic framework and the structural and social policies to foster growth and reduce poverty. The Ministry of

Planning is the focal point for matters regarding the implementation of NEPAD at the national level, and it is sparing no effort to honour its responsibilities when it comes to the implementation of NEPAD objectives. Angola stands ready to continue its participation in regional and subregional programmes that will enhance the capacity of African countries to better respond to the challenges of our initiative, which is a requisite for fostering peace stability and economic growth on the continent.

We support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report and we will work closely with all partners in order to bring complete success to NEPAD and peace to Africa.

The Secretary-General's report contained in document A/59/285, on implementation of the recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, states that armed conflicts remain a major cause of death in our continent. We commend the efforts made by African countries and regional organizations, in particular, in dealing with the scourge of conflict and in promoting peace negotiations and brokering peace agreements. The establishment of the African Peace and Security Council and the Committee of the Wise, as well as an early-warning system, seem to be the right and timely solution.

The recommendations included in the report clearly reflect the current status of the problems and constraints that the majority of countries are still facing today. Six years after the publication of the Secretary-General's first assessment of the causes of conflict in Africa (A/52/871), we are glad to note the substantial reduction of conflicts. However, ongoing conflicts still deserve our keen and special attention.

The report recommends that special attention be given to other potential sources of conflict. We concur that there is a need to address the challenges faced by young people in order to prevent new conflicts, or setbacks in countries in which war has ended. In Angola, the Government has started a special programme to address those problems. Last month, the country held a national conference dedicated to examining such difficult problems.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our development partners for their support in the fight to roll back malaria in Africa. We hope that the fight to find a cure for malaria and other endemic diseases will achieve better results in the years to come. We hope and believe that, given the efforts, commitment and political will of African countries and the support of the international community, we can win this battle.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fully supports the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would like, however, to make a few comments regarding our Government's position on this important agenda item.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/59/285 underlines — and we welcome this in a spirit of solidarity — the political measures taken and the initiatives adopted by the African countries and organizations in implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

In recognizing the efforts being made by the African Union in support of peace and security in the region, our country reaffirms the importance of multilateralism as the only tool for tackling the major challenges confronting our peoples in their struggle to achieve political self-determination and to overcome hunger and poverty. Such challenges cannot be resolved through the pernicious use, from afar, by powerful States and international organizations, of a great variety of unilateral measures and modalities that reflect private economic and political interests. These interests disregard the fact that millions of human beings living in extreme poverty are excluded and subjected to a global economic model that is proving to be unsustainable for human beings.

As can be seen from the report of the Secretary-General, peace of Africa is threatened by the involvement of State and non-State agents, intermediaries and individual companies in the service of the arms traffickers of the countries of the North. Our country joins with the Secretary-General's appeal for the urgent adoption of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in arms.

The African Union has set an example for the international community through its decision to confront the conflicts of the region. It is with interest and support that we view home-grown African solutions to these conflicts. Our country has been resolute in expressing its support for the struggle

against hunger and poverty and for the urgent creation of conditions necessary for the sustainable development of peoples.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela offers its help and cooperation for the enhancement and continuation of all assistance programmes and cooperation activities aimed at facilitating active participation so as to improve the economic and social conditions of the peoples of Africa. That is vital for the consolidation of peace and security in the continent.

At the Monterrey Summit, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela proposed the establishment of an international humanitarian fund. This year, we took an important step in that direction, contributing seed capital of $30 million for cooperation with poor countries of the Latin American, Caribbean and African regions with a view to supporting the efforts of those countries to seek ways and means of confronting poverty and of promoting social and human development. This is intended, specifically, to address the financial shortfalls facing the poor countries, so that their people can receive assistance for natural disasters, pandemics, post-conflict situations and widespread famine — phenomena that endanger the poorest sectors.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): I would like at the outset to commend you, Mr. President, for the able manner in which you have been guiding our work during this session. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union, as well as with that of the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Zimbabwe is pleased to participate in this assessment the past year's progress made in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in the consideration of the causes of conflicts and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Both sub-items are the subjects of excellent reports to the Assembly by the Secretary-General, contained in documents A/59/206 and A/59/285, respectively. The joint consideration of these two sub-items underscores the intrinsic link between peace and development and the urgent need to initiate a dual approach to the challenge Africa needs to face.

The founding document of NEPAD highlights the fact that it is the new agenda for the renewal of the African continent, based on African ownership and leadership. NEPAD is a comprehensive socio-economic renewal programme that is anchored on the three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection. NEPAD's primary objectives are to accelerate the eradication of poverty and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path to high economic growth and sustainable development. The goals African countries seek to achieve through NEPAD are those of the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. The NEPAD process deepens ownership by African countries of their development agenda and also provides a framework for action at the national, regional and international levels.

Despite the progress made by African countries in several areas in the implementation of NEPAD in the past year, Zimbabwe concurs with the Secretary-General's report that international support should entail more aid, debt relief, and foreign investment and trade opportunities. International support should involve greater consistency in external policies so that advances on one front are not undercut by lags on another.

It is vital for development partners to ensure that their aid and trade policies are complementary. Zimbabwe welcomes numerous commitments and initiatives of its development partners, notably by the Group of Eight (G-8) and other bilateral arrangements. However, international action is too dissipated. There is a need for better coherence in the actions of these numerous players as well as an urgent need to bridge the gap between political undertaking and development financing. Zimbabwe also welcomes the fact that the Tokyo International Conference on African Development attaches great importance to NEPAD's role as a reference framework for Africa's development.

Although Africa has witnessed an increase in official development assistance, it remains far too small, as compared to the levels of the 1990s. Africa should not rely on official development assistance alone; Zimbabwe believes that improving market access for Africa's agricultural and non-agricultural goods is the key to its ability to finance development. This is a matter of priority. Developed countries should

phase out subsidies to agricultural products and remove other trade barriers for African exports, and in particular, remove non-tariff barriers to products of interest to African countries.

The Secretary-General's report concludes that improved coherence promises to be a virtuous link in the cycle of increased and effective aid, reformed trade policies and debt relief by developed countries towards Africa. The report also takes note of African Governments that are seeking to gradually align their budgetary spending with NEPAD practice. However, this is a very slow process, since most African countries face severe fiscal constraints and are bound by budgetary agreements negotiated with external financial institutions.

NEPAD bears the hope of the rebirth of the African continent. What Africa needs today is not a diagnosis of the causes of underdevelopment or prescriptive advice, but a strong helping hand from the international community to ensure NEPAD's success, especially through enhanced official development assistance provided without conditionalities, the redemption of pledges to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Trust Fund and the provision of aid without any strings attached.

Zimbabwe greatly appreciates the assistance provided to Africa by the United Nations specialized agencies in the areas of peace and security, poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, governance and infrastructure development. However, much more needs to be done in support of NEPAD to strengthen the capacity of regional economic communities, the NEPAD secretariat and the African Union Commission. With international support through enhanced official development assistance, increased investment, a durable solution to the external debt burden and unhindered market access, the objective of integrating African countries into the global economy and the goals of durable peace and sustainable development can certainly be realized.

Finally, Zimbabwe welcomes the work being done by the recently established Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, currently headed by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, whose mandate includes coordinating global advocacy in support of NEPAD, coordinating all reports to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on NEPAD, and following up on the recommendations of global conferences and summits related to Africa. We hope that the Office will be given the necessary financial and human resources support in order to enable it to discharge its mandate more effectively.

I wish now to turn to agenda item 38 (b), "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". I once more underscore the inextricable link between peace and development that has been eloquently elaborated in the Secretary-General's report. Causes of conflicts are multiple; however, poverty and marginalization remain the key issues.

The complexity of the conflict in Africa warrants the involvement of a number of players in conflict resolution, including regional and subregional organizations. Zimbabwe commends the work of the African Union and subregional organizations. The role of the Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development deserve our appreciation and need concerted support to strengthen that capacity in the prevention and management of conflicts.

No assessment of Africa's situation can ignore the numerous conflicts that are mortgaging the continent's future growth and development. Building lasting peace is a long-term undertaking, to the success of which no effort must be spared. This is an era in which humankind has yet to find a way to save itself from such urgent problems as the scandal of poverty and exclusion, the tragedy of conflicts and humanitarian disasters, the ravages of HIV/AIDS and related infectious diseases, threats to the environment, the impact of the digital divide and the perils of terrorism. The list goes on. The promotion of sustainable development in Africa will remain illusory as long as conflicts continue to ravage our continent.

African leaders have, therefore, established the Peace and Security Council as a mechanism to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in Africa. My delegation calls for the establishment of a strategic partnership between the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to ensure the complementarity of efforts.

Conflict and development are incompatible. African countries must work together and use the mechanism within NEPAD to prevent and resolve armed conflict and bring political stability to Africa.

Conflict remains a serious obstacle to development because it wastes vital resources; and long-term consequences such as refugees, internally displaced persons, landmines and the proliferation of small arms often exacerbate conflicts. Also, the proliferation of illicit arms remains a source of continued instability in Africa, as articulated in the Secretary-General's report.

In conclusion, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General's report that, although there should be African ownership of the African development process, international partnership also has an important role to play in extending comprehensive and integrated assistance to African countries. African development can be achieved only by the concerted efforts of Africa and its development partners.

Mr. Shacham (Israel): Israel welcomes the second consolidated report on progress in implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The report comprehensively outlines the progress that is being made on this important global issue. Israel appreciates all the work that was invested in the report, which details the actions taken by African countries themselves, the responses and contributions of the international community and the actions taken by the United Nations system. It offers a very useful analysis of both the successes and the challenges implicit in this joint endeavour, and thus acts as a record of achievement, as well as a blueprint for further action.

Israel welcomes the commitment of the United Nations to strengthen collaboration and coordination among its components in order to provide the necessary support for the effective implementation of NEPAD, and endorses the recommendations as specified in the report.

Once again, Israel wishes to reiterate its strong support for the actions taken by the African Union itself in its efforts to allow the troubled continent to rise above its difficult past. The African-led, -owned, and -managed initiatives provide clear examples of how countries and regions relying on their own energy can help to harness their potential to pursue development. The short-term priorities in infrastructure outlined by the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee are worthy goals, and Israel hopes that they provide the stepping stones for future projects. The progress that has been made in the water and sanitation sectors is particularly important, as this can only serve to protect the continent's vulnerable health situation, as well as help to nourish its population.

Israel commends the progress that has been made in moving the African Peer Review Mechanism process forward and is pleased to note that the work programme and the rules of procedure for the African peer review panel of eminent personalities were adopted in February in Kigali, Rwanda, and that a separate secretariat and a trust fund have been established for the Mechanism. The fact that the number of countries that have signed on to the Mechanism has now risen to 23 highlights the fact that our efforts are paying off and that African nations have a real desire to help to realize the potential of NEPAD by acting on its promises — good governance, democracy, peace and security, human rights and sound economic management. Israel, of course, encourages other countries to join the Mechanism.

Israel would also like especially to note its satisfaction that science and technology is a NEPAD area of priority, and it hopes that more effort will be made by African countries, the international community and the United Nations system to move forward with the possibilities that that offers. Israel has always believed that it is through science and technology that countries can pull themselves up into new strata of achievements and standards of living. It is through education and training that that is possible at all. In this context, Israel is very proud of, and has high hopes for, the contributions that are being made by its own Centre for International Cooperation, also known as MASHAV.

Israel has a long tradition of profound relations with Africa. From the late 1950s, while it was itself still a developing country, Israel built development partnerships with the newly independent States of sub-Saharan Africa, exchanging and providing information and know-how in food security, the empowerment of women, education and health. Our MASHAV programme carries on this tradition, its basic orientation rooted in our own development experience. In 2003, trainees from over 30 African countries came to Israel to gain new skills to take back to their own countries. In addition, Israel held on-the-spot courses in 14 different African countries in such fields as agriculture, community development, medicine and public health.

Over the past year, the trauma and emergency units constructed by MASHAV at the Komfo Anokye Hospital in Ghana became fully operational, and local staff were trained in the maintenance and running of these facilities. Other MASHAV projects in Africa this year include a cancer treatment centre in Mauritania, the Kibwezi Agricultural Demonstration Farm in Kenya, the Ogongo Drip Irrigation Demonstration Centre in Namibia, the Fossil Valley Agricultural Demonstration Project in Senegal and the Hatcliff Drip and Micro-Irrigation Demonstration Plot in Zimbabwe.

Israel looks forward to making further additions to that list, and to working with African countries, and countries from elsewhere, to help Africa help itself.

We are committed to working together with the international community to continue to aid in ensuring NEPAD's success and in overcoming the challenges facing it. In addition to its aid and training programmes, Israel also actively supports international initiatives, such as the World Bank's International Development Association programmes and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative for debt reduction. Israel has already forgiven the debt of a number of African countries, and debt relief to additional States is expected in the near future.

As a nation of barely 6 million citizens, which itself carries a heavy financial burden arising from a constant need to defend its very existence, Israel's per capita contribution to Africa's future is among the most significant in the world. The reason is simple. As a State comprising a people that has undergone and overcome immense historic challenges, Israel feels that history has taught us that the challenges of nation-building are never insurmountable. So if, in our own humble way, we can be of assistance to other nations striving to realize their national potential, and if, by diverting some of our own scarce resources, we can help to fulfil their national goals, then we ourselves as a nation can only be strengthened.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): My delegation is glad to have been given the opportunity to speak on this item — progress in the implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The context is the duty of the international community, especially the more powerful countries, to redress the economic imbalances that penalize Africa and to help the continent to resolve its regional and national conflicts in a way that goes beyond the mere discussion of their causes. Conflicts in Africa are well known. The reasons for them, however, are complex, and the motives of the relevant actors can be traced not only to African States or factions but also to other regions and interests beyond Africa.

My delegation recognizes that, with regard to peacebuilding, common security, the prevention of conflicts, peacemaking and peacekeeping, Africa is doing more and more, notwithstanding the many adversities that it faces and its lack of means to overcome them. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report (A/59/285) on the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa gives a good overview of the results of the effective ongoing political and military cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional agencies, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and many other organizations.

The management of conflicts in Western Africa also deserves special mention. The current trend in harmonization at the international, regional and subregional levels is not simply a measure of the success achieved by the members of the African Union; there have also been valuable lessons for solving crises in other parts of the world and for the reform of the United Nations itself.

At the national level, it must be acknowledged that there are many examples of good governance, rule of law and the fight against corruption under the impetus of the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African self-monitoring mechanism established by the African Union in order to promote NEPAD, to which a number of countries have already adhered. This management of Africa's affairs by Africans themselves will allow important advances in the provision of basic necessities, such as clean water, food, housing, access to health care and reduction in the spread of malaria and HIV, not to mention a safe environment in which to live, work and bring a family into the world. Parallel to regional cooperation for peace, the helpful role that the peer review process can play in promoting sound national policies and practices exemplifies and sets a precedent for other regions of the world.

The adoption of the "July Package" by the World Trade Organization (WTO), which reopened the negotiations of the Doha Development Round, is to be welcomed, especially since it has taken on board some of the difficulties expressed by African nations. The realization of economic policies suitable for Africa, for the well-being of urban and rural families alike and for the preservation of African values is surely an urgent international obligation. And so it is regrettable that the recent meeting of the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as the meeting of the Group of Eight (G-8) Ministers of Finance that preceded the Board meetings, failed to agree on the total cancellation of debt of the 27 poorest countries. At least it can be said that consensus was reached for the first time in history on the necessity of eliminating such debt.

On another front, management of natural resources deserves further attention, both from Africans and from the international community. As conflicts come to an end, the durability of peace will depend greatly on the capacity of each Government to take control of its natural resources and manage the wealth of the nation in a transparent manner that will benefit all the people. Moreover, the international community should increase its support for mechanisms that prevent the introduction of war-fuelling products into international markets. In this regard, the Kimberley Process on the trafficking of diamonds is both a significant achievement and an important precedent that should be extended to other strategic or high-value products.

Much still remains to be done to rebuild trust among the peoples and ethnic groups in each country, so that a new framework of solidarity can pave the way towards development. Evidence of the recent active role of Africans themselves in the resolution of conflicts shows that African solutions to African problems have started to emerge. The rich patrimony of friendship and family solidarity in Africa could, if allowed to flourish, also play a role in solving conflicts and building peace. The promotion of greater cooperation among religions in Africa could also be a decisive factor in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the collaboration for peace undertaken by the United Nations, the African Union and other regional and subregional groups, as well as the NEPAD initiative, will become a true alliance, founded on a common sense of responsibility. Africa's present difficulties, which are not any different from what other regions of the world have also undergone, should be seen as a window of opportunity to create a new paradigm of global solidarity.

The United Nations should seize this chance to demonstrate that it is indeed a family of nations, ready to assist those in need.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/195 of 17 December 1999, I now call on the observer of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Bhagwat-Singh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted by the African Union (AU) as its programme, seeks to lift Africa out of poverty and steer it towards economic growth and sustainable development. The programme is anchored in the determination of Africans to confront underdevelopment and marginalization in an increasingly globalized world. The NEPAD also promotes the building of partnerships that will give Africa a chance to participate in the global economy.

In order to fulfil its vision, NEPAD has outlined and developed several action plans, especially in the areas of agriculture, infrastructure and the environment. The Environment Action Plan (EAP) of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD is a comprehensive plan that seeks to address the environmental challenges currently facing the continent while combating poverty. The Action Plan was developed under the guidance of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, together with the NEPAD secretariat. The process involved consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is keen to support NEPAD, especially through the Environment Action Plan at the regional and subregional levels. The IUCN commends the United Nations for its support to NEPAD through United Nations General Assembly resolutions 57/2 and 57/7. The IUCN urges continued support and encouragement, particularly to the Secretariat of NEPAD, which is facilitating the partnership for sustainable development across Africa, even though currently overstretched. The IUCN also

notes the work of the secretariat of the Environment Component of NEPAD, set up by the Government of Senegal, and commends its efforts to further the NEPAD Environment Action Plan.

The Environment Action Plan is a practical vehicle for conservation and sustainable development, which, like the wider NEPAD programmes, seeks to involve the subregional economic commissions in the implementation and coordination of the Plan. The regional economic commissions are seen as effective vehicles for the development and integration of the aspirations of the African continent, and calls have been made for the strengthening of their coordination and implementation role. To this end, and with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the IUCN will work together with the regional economic commissions in the development of subregional environment action plans.

The IUCN supports the concept of subregional environment action plans as a sensible mechanism to foster sustainable development through environmental awareness and action. We hope that the United Nations system will continue to support this process and to raise awareness of its value through such agencies as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), especially through its Regional Office for Africa, and the series of publications in the Africa Environment Outlook report. Other United Nations agencies and specialized programmes are also encouraged to continue and expand their support of NEPAD and the Environment Action Plan.

The IUCN would like to see more involvement of all African stakeholders — namely, Governments, the private sector and civil society in general, including women's organizations and community-based organizations — in NEPAD's implementation. In this context, the IUCN would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Wangari Maathai for her Nobel Peace Prize and for demonstrating what women and community-based groups, such as the Green Belt movement, can do for Africa's environment and people and for peace in broader terms. The Nobel Laureate spoke eloquently of her work earlier this month at a meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Academy of Environmental Law in Nairobi, and we look forward to welcoming her to the third World Conservation Congress in Bangkok next month.

Lastly, the IUCN would also like to encourage bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to further increase their support for NEPAD. We look forward to working with the Millennium Development Goals five-year review process, the follow up to the Financing for Development Initiative, and the Group of Seven (G-7) process as opportunities to manifest this increased support.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Gospodinov (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Thank you for giving me the floor and allowing the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to address this item. As we see on our television screens every day, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has never been out of Africa, for there is so much humanitarian work to be done there, including in Chad, as my colleague from Niger just mentioned a few minutes ago.

On the subject of today's theme, partnerships for development and for social and economic progress in Africa are a very high priority for us. Moreover, it is our wish to intensify our cooperative work with the United Nations family in the period ahead. We also wish to intensify our cooperation with NEPAD and its processes, with the African Union, and with other regional organizations. We believe the work done in Africa in recent years, especially through the growth of NEPAD and the creation of the African Union, demonstrates an African vitality that the whole international community should welcome and support.

We say this because working throughout Africa with our network has provided us with both the knowledge and the talent to support what Governments are doing. Our national members brought their programming and priorities to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 after their fifth Pan-African Conference in Ouagadougou. My purpose today is to inform you of the work done to consolidate those priorities at the sixth Pan-African Conference, held in September this year in Algiers.

It is our hope that sincere interest and willingness to go forward, as evidenced by the Secretary-General's report A/59/206, will be matched by a readiness to work with African communities and civil society

leadership in the design and implementation of programmes that meet real African priorities. This will, we believe, significantly improve the prospects of Africa achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The African National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, meeting in Ouagadougou in 2000, committed to four basic objectives. In brief, these were: making a major difference to the health of vulnerable people by adopting the health initiative; massively scaling up their response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic; making food security a strategic priority for the decade; and enhancing the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' capacity to function as auxiliaries to their Governments in the humanitarian field.

Four years later, at their meeting in Algiers in September 2004, our African members adopted a plan of action to take the Ouagadougou commitments forward, and to build effective partnerships with other national and international actors.

The Algiers Plan of Action brings together the Ouagadougou commitments with the objectives set by the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

The Plan itself will soon be circulated to all member States and organizations concerned, and will be introduced to the United Nations system. We are also planning a special briefing session with all African Permanent Missions and other interested organizations to ensure that they are aware of the assets that our movement brings to this important set of strategic tasks. In the meantime, I shall elaborate on those points most relevant to the United Nations for the benefit of this debate.

In Algiers, our African member Societies expressed their great concern at the increase in the number of natural disasters and conflicts on their continent and the huge crises faced because of food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and other growing health threats. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening their capacities, and in particular their volunteer base. They appreciated the partnerships available with Governments, the African Union, United Nations agencies, civil society and corporations. They also expressed their concern for the people affected by the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and their solidarity with, and respect for, the efforts of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society.

Partnership opportunities and shared objectives framed by the conjunction of the Millennium Development Goals with our own strategy were a major topic at the Algiers conference. We were very pleased with the energy and dedication provided by the representatives of the United Nations system, specialized agencies and the African Union at the conference. We saw, for example, that the World Food Programme (WFP) is keen to support Africa in the commitment given to our movement when Mr. James Morris addressed the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2003 in Geneva. We are now engaged in a detailed discussion with the WFP in order to improve the links between our National Societies and the WFP.

Similar discussions are under way with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are also starting with the World Health Organization (WHO). We intend vigorously to pursue partnership opportunities, which connect Governments, agencies and others devoted to progress in this region, with the African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their community outreach structures. The results of those partnerships are already visible: our network has now vaccinated more than 140 million children in 29 countries against measles, and WHO reports show that the incidence of measles in Africa has dropped by 47 per cent since the start of our vaccination initiative four years ago.

We intend to build these opportunities to achieve results through very close cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Our partners see how our unique status as an international organization, combined with the government auxiliary status of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, builds a framework for progress and benefit for the most vulnerable. This is, we believe, vital for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. But their achievement will depend on the degree to which communities and the vulnerable people themselves become involved in the design of the programmes and in implementing them. This is essential — as the Secretary-General himself has recognized.

It is particularly opportune that we are bringing the outcomes of the Pan-African Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference to the attention of the General Assembly now. The documents, which will be disbursed in the near future, illustrate the strength we have acquired within the United Nations and its system

of specialized agencies. It is a strength that has been significantly facilitated by the decision of the United Nations General Assembly exactly ten years ago today to grant observer status to the IFRC. That decision, adopted at the thirty-eighth plenary meeting on 19 October 1994 and contained in resolution number 49/2, has created opportunities for many partnerships that have made a real difference in the lives of the most vulnerable people. Together we can save and are saving lives. It is in that context that we are speaking to you today.

Permit me, Mr. President, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary, to thank the General Assembly once again for its decision, and to express our hope that in the next ten years we will mark even better and more fruitful cooperation with both Governments and the United Nations. We stand ready to play our part globally and locally. We will continue to develop the African priorities as identified in Ouagadougou, and taken forward in Algiers.

We trust that the Federation's Algiers Plan of Action will be seen as a valuable addition to our joint work and an essential tool for all of those who sincerely wish to see Africa rise above poverty and despair, and build prosperity amidst real human dignity.

In conclusion, Sir, I would like to go back one week, when the Nobel Committee decided to award a brave Kenyan environmentalist this year's Nobel Peace Prize. She plants trees. If we will follow this example and, through our partnerships, plant a tree, build a school, save a life, or help a child in Africa, then our discussion today will have significant meaning.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/18, of 10 November 1978, and decision 53/453, of 18 December 1998, I now call on the observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mr. Bouabid (International Organization of la Francophonie) (*spoke in French*): This is the first time I have taken the floor at this session. Allow me, therefore, to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and its Secretary General, President Abdou Diouf, heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of this important session of the General Assembly.

The International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) is happy again, this year, to speak to the General Assembly and discuss the agenda item concerning the New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support.

We first wish to renew our solidarity with our 29 African member States and with Africa in general. The International Organization of la Francophonie has been and will remain a place for cooperation and solidarity where Africa will always be given special attention.

The development of Africa requires, inter alia, the success of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We are fully aware of that and are working in close cooperation with our African brothers and with the other international partners.

Because of his long experience with the problems of development in Africa, the Secretary-General of the OIF, President Abdou Diouf, has always believed that NEPAD was a crucial stage in the ownership of Africa's development by the African States themselves.

I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the high quality of his second report on the progress in implementation and international support for NEPAD, which is now before us today. La Francophonie is a partner in that endeavour and is happy to note that, despite difficulties, the implementation of NEPAD is moving ahead resolutely. It is doing so because Africa has demonstrated its long-term commitment to NEPAD and its ownership of that programme.

We see the practice of setting objectives for expenditures in priority areas set by NEPAD as a guarantee of the consistency between the statements and the actions of African Governments in favour of that enormous endeavour.

I would like to outline some aspects of the implementation of NEPAD, of which La Francophonie is particularly mindful. I will begin with information and communication technologies, which are essential tools for building the future. The OIF continues, through the Francophone Institute for new information technologies and training, to work to reduce the digital divide that still separates the North from the South and puts Africans in a very unfavourable situation. We thus support the integration of Africa into the globalization process by facilitating ownership of information

technologies so as to make them part of global development policies, and by promoting adaptation to the specific cultural and linguistic traits of African countries.

The programme of the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie for 2004-2005 includes support for African strategic initiatives in the framework of information technology, including inter-governmental initiatives that have been planned or designed by NEPAD. The agency also intends to strengthen international synergies to help formulate regional plans during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in 2005.

The development of new technologies is crucial in order to truly integrate Africa into the economic and commercial relations that were born of globalization. But that is not enough. La Francophonie is therefore lending its assistance to strengthen the education and negotiating capacities of its African members. That will help in the design and execution of economic strategies aimed at mobilizing investments — without which the implementation of NEPAD would be seriously handicapped.

Likewise, support for the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) is part of a two-fold approach — on the one hand, it is meant to promote the development of enterprise and, on the other hand, to provide a solid basis for the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Education is certainly a sector where activities carried out by La Francophonie will help implement NEPAD. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concerning basic education, improving the quality of teaching and helping to rebuilding educational facilities — particularly in countries emerging from conflict — are all concerns that La Francophonie shares with NEPAD.

Our Organization will continue to support the formulation of national education policies, as well as professional and technical training in Africa. Ministers of Education of the French-speaking countries, who are meeting now in Africa, in Mauritius at the fifty-first Conference of Francophonie Ministers of Education (CONFEMEN), are now working to attain those goals.

Culture has always been an important field for the French-speaking community. We are happy that our work in that area is consonant with the NEPAD plan of action to develop cultural tourism in Africa.

La Francophonie is always trying to foster African arts and develop cultural industries in our member countries. As an example, I refer to the Market for African Performing Arts in Abidjan, which is now a well-known event among professionals on the African artistic scene.

Last week in Cotonou, our senior manager organized a seminar to train people in publishing and in managing cultural events. Our programmes to support travelling live performances and audiovisual production in the South, and to help distribute African films to theatres, supplement the regular support of La Francophonie to several important events in the African cinema world. Of course, there has been support for the Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) and the Carthage international film festival in Tunis, but also the "Ecrans libres" festival in Mali, the "Quintessence" festival in Benin and "Ecrans noirs" in Cameroon.

NEPAD's goal is sustainable development in Africa, within the framework of solidarity — African solidarity and international solidarity with Africa. With that framework in mind, La Francophonie will hold its tenth summit next month in Ouagadougou, at the invitation of the Government of Burkina Faso, to discuss, specifically, La Francophonie — a unified space for sustainable development.

In the lead-up to the summit, whose theme works so well with the central objective of NEPAD, we organized a seminar last May in Ouagadougou in order to identify points of convergence between the programmes of La Francophonie and those in the framework of NEPAD, in particular in the areas of the economy and sustainable development. Fourteen joint intervention areas were identified at that time.

Like several other initiatives, the meeting of the Forum on Economic Intelligence and Development on the New Partnership for Africa's Development in Paris in November 2003 demonstrated the determination of the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and to lend adequate harmonized support for the implementation of NEPAD, at a time when Africa is trying to carry out the necessary restructuring that is its responsibility.

But, as the report of the Secretary-General stresses, much remains to be done by the international community to support NEPAD, particularly with regard to creating an enabling international environment to support Africa's development and to promote investment to finance the main sectoral priorities of NEPAD.

The OIF appreciates the increasing role of the African Peer Review Mechanism that was established within NEPAD. This proves the commitment of African countries to improve governance and to adopt transparent and stringent management criteria, which should make it possible to fund projects and programmes of regional interest and to appeal to private investors. For our part, we will continue to support our member countries, with a view to making strides in that area.

War and conflict have been undermining efforts to develop Africa. The OIF remains committed to peace, to preventing and peacefully resolving crises and conflicts and to strengthening democracy, rights and freedoms in its African member countries. Likewise, we will continue to support electoral processes and to promote human rights and democratic culture within the context of the implementation of the Bamako Declaration, to which French-speaking heads of State or Government committed themselves at their ninth summit, held in Beirut in 2002.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the national and regional political structures that are needed to implement NEPAD, the OIF will continue to promote synergy with international partners, including the United Nations and the African Union. Jointly with the United Nations, the OIF intends to organize a new dialogue with relevant international and regional organizations, to study the possibility of more dynamic cooperation to promote early warning as the best way to prevent conflicts.

I wish to conclude by appealing for a more sustained, consistent and lasting commitment on the part of the international community to NEPAD and to the development of Africa. As Africans and as partners of Africa, we are well aware that this is an important time in the history of the continent. This is an unprecedented, highly symbolic time for the new face of Africa and for the hopes and aspirations that it cherishes. In the daunting challenge of implementing NEPAD, Africa certainly bears primary responsibility, but it cannot meet that responsibility without international support.

The International Organization of La Francophonie is there to support this major initiative by making available its French-speaking expertise and experience in the areas of peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sustainable development. Those are all areas where the OIF has, over the years, acquired some experience and real expertise.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has just concluded its joint debate on agenda item 38 (New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support) and its sub-items, and on agenda item 46 (2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa). Sixty-four speakers participated in the debate.

Many representatives emphasized the importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a framework for renewal and for the economic, social and political development of Africa. In that regard, they placed emphasis on the African Peer Review Mechanism as an instrument to support African efforts to establish sound political institutions, good political and economic governance, respect for the rule of law and the promotion of human rights, with a view to establishing the conditions needed for Africa's growth and development.

Many speakers welcomed the efforts made to integrate the gender approach into the implementation of NEPAD. It was in that framework that the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa was adopted at the African Union summit held in July 2004 at Addis Ababa.

The international community's support for the implementation of NEPAD was welcomed, especially regarding debt alleviation, increase in official development assistance, access to markets and assistance in capacity-building. Many speakers emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation as an indispensable complement to international cooperation for development.

Others praised the Secretary-General's establishment of the Advisory Panel on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. They also expressed their support for the

activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

In connection with sub-item (b) of agenda item 38, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", a number of speakers noted the favourable development of the situation of peace and security in Africa during the past year, including with the reduction of the number of conflicts in the region, the development of a common security and defence policy and the efforts undertaken to organize an international conference on the Great Lakes region.

Representatives of Africa's development partners highlighted the measures they had taken to help the African Union build its capacities in peacekeeping. Emphasis was also placed on the need to provide the African Union with the resources it needs to play a vanguard role in addressing crisis situations in Africa, in partnership with the United Nations.

Many speakers emphasized the great importance of post-conflict peacebuilding and welcomed the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups as part of a comprehensive approach to post-conflict reconstruction and development.

On item 46, "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa", speakers recognized that diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria not only severely put Africa's health systems to the test, but also constitute a major threat to the development of the continent. Many speakers welcomed the efforts undertaken by African countries to fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria. Nonetheless, they emphasized that Africa needs the support of the international community in order to meet its health challenges. Africa's development partners reiterated their commitment to help the continent confront its range of health problems.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all participants for the interest they have shown and for their participation in the debate on these items.

The Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda items 38 and 46.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.